

Type of Course: Graduate Seminar
Professor: Dr. Sarah Deyong (sdeyong@tamu.edu)
Office: ARCA329, T/R 2:00-3:00 pm or by appointment
Place and Time: ARCC208; T/R 12:45-2:00 pm

Course Overview:

Arch 639 selectively surveys the history, theory and criticism of architecture in the twentieth century. Exposure to the relevant historical and intellectual contexts will provide essential background for a more comprehensive understanding of new directions in architecture. Students will investigate a variety of positions, historical perspectives and critical responses. Emphasis will be given to contemporary theories and debate. Also examined is the significance of Non-Western traditions in our global present.

Learning Objectives:

- To enrich the student's awareness of the theories and ideas that inform contemporary practice and debate.
- To introduce students to the unique characteristics of their field including:
 - The notion that architecture vividly reflects the cultures in which it has evolved, and is shaped by social, economic, technological and geographic conditions.
 - The idea that contemporary issues are an outgrowth of, and at times a reaction to, prior preoccupations.
 - The fact that architecture is interdisciplinary and draws its theories and ideas from both the arts (philosophy, cultural theory, aesthetics) and the sciences (biology, anthropology, mathematics and computer science, for example).
- To enhance the student's ability to speak and write effectively on architectural history, theory and criticism.
- To complement the design studio by surveying and analyzing historical precedents, investigating their meaning, and evaluating their usefulness as formal or programmatic models.
- To raise the student's awareness of the parallels and divergences between Western and non-Western architecture as they relate to contemporary practice. (N.b. This topic is specifically addressed in the seminar sections on Critical Regionalism, Sustainable Design and Informal Settlements. See class Schedule below).

Course Requirements and Grading:

- Attendance and class participation (5%)
- Weekly assignments, close reading of a text (50%)

- 2 I.D. Quizzes (10% each; total 20%)
- Assignment (20%)
- Bonus of 0.5% for every lecture attended in the Spring 2010 Lecture Series.

The weekly assignment is a summary and response to the assigned readings (1-2 pages), due the evening before class. Students will post their responses on our Google group under "Pages." Clearly indicate your name and the title of the reading.

We will review your writing as a class during seminar discussions. You will receive feedback on your writing from your classmates and me. The purpose of the feedback is to challenge you to become better readers and writers yourselves. Know that is perfectly normal if your writing is muddy at the beginning when you are still working out your thoughts. What is important at this early stage is that you get your thoughts down on paper so that you can see them. Ultimately, however, this is not the goal of writing, but the starting point of your thinking/writing process from whence you reflect on what you have written, refine and clarify your thoughts, and develop complexity. It is at this level of writing that you will be graded on. Remember that you are writing not only for yourself but also for others. Writing will hopefully challenge you to become more rigorous, critical and reflective about your own thinking/design process.

Instructions for the two assignments will follow in a separate hand-out.

Grading Policy:

A 90-100 (Excellent grasp of all course content and material. Students must also demonstrate intellectual curiosity and openness.)

B 80-89 (Good understanding of course content and material as demonstrated in most course requirements.)

C 70-79 (Satisfactory completion of at least half of the course requirements)

D 60-69 (Satisfactory completion of less than half of the course requirements)

F 59 and below (Unsatisfactory completion of course requirements)

Required Text:

Harry Francis Mallgrave and Christina Contandrioupolous, *Architectural Theory, Volume II, An Anthology from 1871-2005* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008).

Readings are listed on the class schedule and will be available on our Google Group under "Files."

Recommended Texts (optional):

Conrads, Ulrich, ed. *Programs and Manifestoes on 20th Century Architecture*. Trans. Michael Bullock. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971.

Ockman, Joan, ed. *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968: A Documentary Anthology*. New York: Rizzoli, 1993.

Hays, K. Michael, ed. *Architectural Theory Since 1968*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998.

Class Schedule:

Note: Changes to the syllabus may be made at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1 T Jan.17: **Introduction**

Rem Koolhaas, "Why I Wrote Delirious New York," *Any*, v. 0 (May-June 1993): 42-43.

R Jan. 21: **Formal Expressionism v. Functional Form: The Deutscher Werkbund and the Bauhaus**

Week 2 M Jan. 25: **Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Dr. Beatriz Colomina**

T Jan. 26: *CLASS CANCELLED*

R Jan. 28: Margaret Olin, "The Kunstwollen," *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 148-153.

Henri Focillon, excerpt from *The Life of Forms*

Bruce Mau, *Life Style* (London: Phaidon Press, 2000). [In this book, see Sanford Kwinter's essay, "The Gay Science (What is Life?)."]

Week 3 T Feb. 2: **New Concepts of Space and Time: De Stijl and the Russian Avant-garde**

R Feb. 4: Yves-Alain Bois, "The De Stijl Idea," *Painting As Model* (Boston: MIT Press, 1990), pp. 101-121.

Week 4 M Feb. 8: **Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Andreas Pedersen of BIG**

T Feb. 9: **The Machine: Le Corbusier, Russian Constructivism and Beyond**

R Feb. 11: Le Corbusier, *Towards a New Architecture*

*Kieran/Timberlake, *Fabricating Architecture*

Week 5 T Feb. 16: **Phenomenology, Anthropology and Critical Regionalism: Alternatives to International Modernism**

R Feb. 18: Hassan Fathy, *Architecture for the Poor: An Experiment in Rural Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973)

*Juhani Pallasmaa, "Tradition & Modernity: The Feasibility of Regional Architecture in Post-Modern Society." *Architectural Review* 188:1095 (May 1988).

Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Sarah Whiting and Ron Witte

Week 6 T Feb. 23: **Megastructure and Cybernetics**

R Feb. 25: Jane Jacobs, excerpt from *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

Week 7 M Mar. 1: **Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Ted Flato**

T Mar. 2: Christopher Alexander, "A City is Not a Tree."

R Mar. 4: **Postmodern Reactions and Extensions: Colin Rowe and Peter Eisenman**

- Week 8 M Mar. 8: **Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Nicholas Boyarski**
 T Mar. 9: Robert Somol, Introduction to Eisenman's *Diagram Diaries*.
 R Mar. 11: Quiz: Slide I.D.
- Week 9 **Spring Break**
- Week 10 T Mar. 24: **The American Avant-Garde**
 R Mar. 26: Greg Lynn, "Architectural Curvilinearilty: The Folded, the Pliant and the
 Supple," *Architectural Design* 102 (March/April 1993).
- Week 11 T Mar. 31: **The New Pragmatism and the Informal**
 R Apr. 2: MVRDV, Interview in *El Croquis*.
- Week 12 M Apr. 5: **Lecture Series 5 pm in Geren Auditorium: Francois de Menil**
 T Apr. 7: Michael Speaks, "It's Out There ... the Formal Limits of the American Avant-
 Garde," *Architectural Design* 68:5/6 (May-June 1998).
 R Apr. 9: Sanford Kwinter, "FFE: Le Trahison des Clercs (and other Travesties of the
 Modern)," *Any* 24 (1999).
- Week 13 T Apr. 14: **Sustainable Design Beyond the New Millenium**
 R Apr. 16: David Gissen, ed., *Big & Green: Toward Sustainable Architecture in the 21st*
 Century (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).
- Week 14 T Apr. 21: **Informal Settlements**
 R Apr. 23: Excerpts from *Design Like You Give a Damn, Architectural Responses to*
 Humanitarian Crises
- Week 15 T Apr. 28: Quiz: Slide I.D.
 R Apr. 30: Conclusion
 Term Assignment Due

Disclosures

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination stature that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Support Services for Student with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Student Services Building. The phone number is (979) 845-1637.

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As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, work, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission that person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have question regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.” *An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.*

GRADE APPEALS

Students should know that there is a Department of Architecture “Grade Appeal Process” should it be necessary to contest the grade given in this course. Please contact the department office in the event that you want to initiate the process.